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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of the University of Alaska Anchorage's (UAA) 1996 survey of student needs. The objectives of the survey were to gain insight into the students' goals and motivations, and to measure students' needs and satisfaction as part of institutional accountability. The survey is intended to be used as a guide to improvement, planning and budgeting decisions, revitalization of campus services, creation of a profile for at-risk students, and communication with the larger community regarding UAA's status. This survey covers only the UAA Main Campus, and was conducted using a random sample of enrolled students. The report includes 40 tables and three distinct parts. Part 1 addresses students' higher education goals and perceptions about how the university can assist them in reaching those goals. Part 2 focuses on students' evaluation of preferences for UAA facilities and services. Part 3 strives to build a profile of UAA at-risk students. The Office of Institutional Research used the survey data in an effort to link information regarding students' reasons for enrolling at UAA with the practical application of academic planning at UAA. Currently, 50% of students enrolled at UAA are there to take courses for self-improvement. The proportion of degree-seeking students has, however, been increasing since 1990. This increase has important implications for academic policy issues.

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CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY

A N C H O R A G E C A M P U S

S P R I N G 1 9 9 6

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INTRODUCTION

Institutional Context of Study and Commitment to UAA 2000

Results of the present survey help us gain a common awareness of the needs of UAA students. Next, we need to mobilize collective wisdom to turn student responses into a blueprint for action.

The University as a community of learners has made a commitment to weaving UAA 2000 values into the fabric of all that we do. One of the values guiding the present study is that of transforming our institutional commitment to excellence and continuous improvement into action. Another equally important value inspiring this survey is that of guiding administrative decisions and actions with sound research and information. By successfully employing student input to promote our ability to meet the needs of our students, we are taking a small but significant step to moving closer to the goals of UAA 2000.

This study represents a comprehensive effort to obtain information on factors that enable UAA students to attain their goals and, in general, facilitate student learning. Student opinions are identified for the purpose of conducting in-depth assessment of UAA's institutional effectiveness. In conducting this study, UAA is taking the stand that stresses the "alignment" of institutional purpose with the needs of our students. An alignment of purpose will require collective thinking on the part of all UAA staff and faculty. By analyzing the student input collected as part of this study, we have an opportunity to examine the processes that underlie what we do both academically and administratively. This examination allows us to seek out weak links and move vigorously to improve them. In the end, we hope the results of the survey will be effectively used to improve the operations of the University and to make the campus more responsive to the needs of the students.

UAA Student Surveys: Historical Perspective

University of Alaska Anchorage, in its current form, is a relatively new institution that came together in 1987. Restructuring was barely completed when the first Current Student Survey was administered in the Spring of 1988. The early surveys attempted to find measures of student satisfaction and document customer satisfaction. The UAA Current Student Survey was a questionnaire administered in UAA classrooms, every Spring, between 1988 and 1994. Even though this instrument evolved over the years, several questions that address student needs, satisfaction and goals remained unchanged and are used even today. Some of these questions allow us to examine shifts in student opinions or needs in conjunction with the ever changing composition of UAA's student body.

In 1996 the practice of conducting student surveys was resumed, after missing one year. The original questionnaire underwent many revisions and reviews. The modified questionnaire used in the present study was presented for discussion in the Chancellor's Cabinet. A substantial amount of time was devoted to clearly outlining the purpose of the survey and identifying who on campus would benefit from the results.

Survey Objectives

Following is a list of several equally important objectives that guided the present study:

- Gain insight into what students' goals are and what motivates students in the educational choices they make. Related to this objective is a need to identify students who are not planning to re-enroll, why they were choosing not to return and also identify what they thought the institution could do to help them re-enroll.
- Measure student satisfaction and student needs as part of larger institutional accountability. Under this objective an attempt was made to collect information which could be used to identify UAA's strengths and weaknesses and guide improvement. In other words, gather information

The intent behind developing these objectives was to promote an internal dialogue on campus that would result in creating tight webs of academic and student support services, within which student learning can take place.

that would suggest actions which may be taken to improve the quality of UAA's programs. Survey results can help UAA identify areas in which additional investments are needed. Results can also point out weaknesses that allow the institution to target scarce resources more effectively.

- Informing UAA planning and budgeting decisions so as to target available resources. The intent behind this objective was to use student input, in conjunction with other measures of educational outcomes, in the overall institutional management of UAA.
- Enable UAA to revitalize its campus services.
- Create a profile of UAA students who are educationally at-risk and document the needs of such students. At UAA we take pride in offering open enrollment and support both degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking students. The focus of this objective was to systematically identify needs of students who enter UAA, through open enrollment, as adult learners, as under-prepared students, as at-risk students or as part-time working students.
- To report to various UAA constituencies and the public regarding their "return on investment." As part of overall assessment, student survey results are indicators in UAA's periodic report to the public and other accreditation agencies. The primary intent is to assure funding authorities and the public that tax dollars invested in higher education are well spent. A secondary intent is to assure students and their parents that they are receiving a good education.

Survey Sample

This report focuses on a survey of 770 randomly selected students on UAA Anchorage campus.

The scope of the study included UAA Anchorage Main Campus and the Mat-Su extended site. This particular report focuses only on the Anchorage Main Campus. A separate report, to be published later this year, will include results of the Mat-Su survey. To limit the probability of introducing bias in the sample, random sampling was employed in the selection of students who participated in the study. In April 1996, the Office of Institutional Research selected a random sample of currently enrolled credit students. The sample was developed by enlisting the SAS "RANUNI" function and setting parameters which allowed the use of the time of day as the seed in the initialization of the random selection process. The process was initiated using the pool of all enrolled students and then

allowing the computer to randomly select until 6% (770 students) of the Anchorage campus population had been identified.

The primary issue in choosing a sample size is that it needs to be sufficient to assure the researchers that the sample is representative of the student body. Since the population (UAA-Anchorage student headcount N =12,111) that the sample is drawn from is a large population, a 6 % random sample of 770 students was considered adequate for ensuring reliability and validity of findings.

Prior to administering the survey, the random sample was analyzed to assess how representative it was on several variables. Table 1 lists results of this analysis and documents that the proportions of the sample categories closely mirrored the population. The results from such a sample could be used to make valid inferences about the population. The selection resulted in a sample which was characterized as 60% female, 76% white, 36% special undergraduates, 36% full-time and 37% enrolled in bachelor degree programs. In comparison, the Spring 1996 opening bio-demographics of the Anchorage credit student population (12,111 students), was 58% female, 77% white, 34% special undergraduates, 42% full-time and 37% enrolled in bachelor degree programs.

Table 1 also lists the results of an analysis of survey respondents who successfully participated in the study. Of the 770 students selected, 580 students (75.3%) responded to the survey, and 28 students (3.6%) refused to respond. In addition, 162 students (21.0%) were not contacted by survey interviewers due to incorrect or non-existent telephone numbers. Of the 580 students who completed the survey, 61% were female, 76% white, 34% special undergraduates, 37% full-time, and 39% were bachelor degree seekers. Once again these proportions closely mirror the population breakdown on the same variables.

Table 1

How Representative is the Survey Sample?
Comparison of Survey Sample, Survey Respondents and UAA Student Population

| Student Bio-Demographics | Sample % of Total | Respondent % of Total | Population % of Total |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| TOTAL SAMPLE | N = 770 6.4% | N = 580 4.8% | N = 12,111 |
| % of Population Total | | | |
| FULL-TIME/PART-TIME STATUS | | | |
| Full-time | 35.8% | 37.2% | 41.7% |
| Part-time | 64.2% | 62.8% | 58.3% |
| GENDER | | | |
| Female | 59.6% | 61.4% | 57.6% |
| Male | 40.4% | 38.6% | 42.4% |
| ETHNICITY | | | |
| American Indian | 1.7% | 1.9% | 1.5% |
| African American/Black | 4.5% | 4.7% | 5.3% |
| Alaska Native | 5.3% | 5.2% | 5.0% |
| Hispanic | 4.4% | 5.2% | 3.8% |
| Other | 3.5% | 3.4% | 2.8% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 4.0% | 3.4% | 4.1% |
| White | 76.1% | 75.9% | 77.2% |
| CLASS STANDING | | | |
| Freshman | 17.9% | 17.9% | 18.7% |
| Sophomore | 11.3% | 11.6% | 12.4% |
| Junior | 11.8% | 11.9% | 10.6% |
| Senior | 17.4% | 18.8% | 19.8% |
| Special | 36.0% | 33.8% | 33.5% |
| Graduate | 5.6% | 6.0% | 5.0% |
| PRIMARY DEGREE | | | |
| Certificate | 1.7% | 1.9% | 1.5% |
| Associate Degree | 19.6% | 19.0% | 20.4% |
| Bachelor Degree | 37.1% | 39.0% | 37.4% |
| Master Degree | 5.6% | 6.0% | 5.3% |
| Not Declared | 36.0% | 34.1% | 35.3% |

UAA Anchorage students selected in the survey sample and those who responded to the survey (75% response rate, i.e. 580 out of 779 students) are representative of UAA's student body.

The survey instrument was, for the most part, developed in-house to measure student perceptions discussed in the study's objectives.

Survey Instrument

The first step in preparing items for the survey instrument was to specify the variables that we were trying to measure. The next step was to construct questions that focus on these variables. As pointed out earlier, the specific variables we were attempting to measure were determined by the stated objectives of the study (page 2-3). Next, questions used to measure these variables were either written specifically for a given variable, adapted from questions used by other testing organizations (ACT, Noel & Levitz etc.), or adapted from instruments used on other campuses.

The survey has three distinct parts. Part 1 dealt with the students' higher education goals at UAA and attempted to explore students' perceptions regarding what the institution could do to assist them in persisting to the completion of their respective goals. Part 2 focused on students' evaluation of preferences for UAA services and facilities. Finally, Part 3 attempted to build a profile of UAA at-risk students who are in need of special attention.

The survey instrument was pilot tested by 20 interviewers, using the telephone, on 40 randomly selected students on UAA campus. The instrument was revised based on the interviewers and students comments.

Survey Method and Administration

The survey was administered via telephone and resulted in a 75.3% response rate.

In the past, student surveys on UAA campus were conducted in selected classrooms and administered to all students who were present on the day the questionnaire was administered. As with all other survey methods, there are advantages and disadvantages to any given technique. The advantages with in-class administration of an instrument is that survey responses are significantly higher than what would be expected with a mail survey. The limitations of the technique have to do with the survey responses being limited only to students who were in class the day the questionnaire was administered. To overcome this problem, and at the same time maintain high response rates, the alternative method of telephone surveys was used.

Particular attention was given to selecting and training interviewers. The interviewers were selected from a pool of telephone interviewers maintained by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) on campus. Two 4-hour training sessions were conducted with the selected interviewers to familiarize them with the instrument, train them in recording responses and answer their questions about the survey. Each interviewer was given a training booklet to use as resource material. The purpose of the training booklet was to reinforce and supplement what was covered in the training session.

In an effort to maintain anonymity, identification numbers for each student in the sample were attached to their respective records. The identification numbers were to be used in contacting the student for the survey interview and later in the analysis of the survey results. Complete confidentiality was assured to the respondents and analysis of survey results was aimed at the group and not the individual level. Survey results are reported as group averages.

PART I - EDUCATIONAL GOALS AT UAA

Survey Results and Discussion

At UAA, we want to promote the success of each individual student by first helping him or her to find a goal and then assisting him or her pursue it. When students are clear about their purposes and how our institution can best serve those purposes, they are more likely to persist and succeed.

One of the most sought after pieces of information is a student's reasons for enrolling at UAA. It is a question that is included in nearly all student surveys and any shift in response trends on this question can trigger a re-examination of institutional goals and strategies. The first and foremost goal adopted under UAA 2000 is that of meeting the higher education goals of those we serve. In linking students' reasons for attending UAA to the academic programs and curriculum offered, and strategic planning in general, the institution is taking an important step in the realization of goals under UAA 2000.

Students often have more than one reason to enroll at any institution. The question in this study related to students' reasons for enrolling at UAA was formulated to accommodate all possible anticipated responses. Table 2 lists the number and percent of survey participants who responded 'Yes' to the response choices offered to them. As shown in Table 2, 80% of respondents are enrolled for the purpose of obtaining a degree. Furthermore, the type of degree they are seeking is a bachelor's degree.

Students' reasons for enrolling at UAA draw a profile of personal aspirations and academic self-confidence of our student body.

Table 2

| Q-1. | Reasons for Enrolling at UAA (N=580, students were allowed multiple responses) | 'Yes' Response N | % |
|---------|---|---------------------|------|
| Q-1.1 | Take a few job-related courses | 155 | 26.7 |
| Q-1.2 | Take a few courses for self-improvement | 295 | 50.9 |
| Q-1.3 | Take courses necessary to transfer to another college | 89 | 15.3 |
| Q-1.4 | Maintain or obtain a certification | 191 | 32.9 |
| Q-1.5 | Complete a vocational/technical program | 64 | 11.0 |
| Q-1.6 | Get a degree | 468 | 80.7 |
| Q-1.6.a | Associate's degree | 105 | 18.1 |
| Q-1.6.b | Bachelor's degree | 319 | 55.0 |
| Q-1.6.c | Master's degree | 67 | 11.6 |
| Q-1.7 | No definite purpose in mind | 9 | 1.6 |
| Q-1.8 | No response | 1 | 0.2 |
| Q1. | What was your main purpose for enrolling at UAA? | | |

Consistent with UAA's Learn for Life philosophy, 50% of our students are here to take a course for self-improvement. Other frequently cited reasons for enrolling were to take a few courses related to the student's job (26.7%) and/or maintain or obtain certification (32.9%).

While Table 2 lists the many possible reasons a student may have for enrolling at UAA, Table 3 summarizes the one most important reason for attending UAA. Approximately half the students (46%) indicated they were here for a bachelor's degree, followed by those who were here to get an associate's degree (12.9%) or take a few courses for self-improvement (12.8%).

Nine years after restructuring, UAA continues to support a community college mission, in addition to a four-year university mission.

Table 3

| Q-1.1 The One Most Important Reason For Attending UAA 'Yes' Response | | | |
|--|---|-----|------|
| | | N | % |
| Q-1.1.1 | Take a few job-related courses | 34 | 5.9 |
| Q-1.1.2 | Take a few courses for self-improvement | 74 | 12.8 |
| Q-1.1.3 | Take courses necessary to transfer to another college | 25 | 4.3 |
| Q-1.1.4 | Maintain or obtain a certification | 38 | 6.6 |
| Q-1.1.5 | Complete a vocational/technical program | 9 | 1.6 |
| Q-1.1.6 | Get a degree | | |
| Q-1.6.a | Associate's degree | 75 | 12.9 |
| Q-1.6.b | Bachelor's degree | 269 | 46.4 |
| Q-1.6.c | Master's degree | 49 | 8.4 |
| Q-1.1.7 | No definite purpose in mind | 3 | 0.5 |
| Q-1.1.8 | No response | 4 | 0.7 |
| Q-1.1: Of the reasons you indicated as being your main purpose for enrolling at UAA, what was the one most important reason? | | | |

Table 4 has historical trends on higher education goals expressed by UAA students in previous Current Student Surveys as well as the Spring 1996 responses in the present study. As the empty cells in Table 5 indicate, the question on objectives for enrolling at UAA has not always been asked in the same format. Further, the research method employed in collecting survey data has also varied over the years. In 1996, the survey method involved a telephone survey, whereas in previous years data was collected by administering a questionnaire in UAA classrooms. In spite of these variations in question format and survey method for describing reasons for enrolling at UAA, trend data shows some interesting shifts in student responses. In 1996, students enrolling at UAA for job-related courses was significantly down from approximately 43% in previous years to 26%. Students enrolling in courses for self-improvement has increased from 30% in 1994 to 50% in 1996. Students attending

UAA for the purpose of transferring to another college in 1996 (15%) was more than double the proportion of students with similar objectives in previous years. Enrolling at UAA to obtain a degree (80%) has continued to be a stable and important reason for most students over the years.

Table 4

| Reasons for Enrolling* | Spring Semester | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------|------|------|------|---|
| | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1996 | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Take Job-Related Courses | 42.5 | 45.6 | 43.8 | 45.9 | 26.7 | |
| Courses For Self-improvement | 40.9 | 40.1 | 37.3 | 30.4 | 50.9 | |
| Basic Skills | 23.9 | 23.1 | 20.8 | 20.2 | | |
| Courses For Transferring | 7.1 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 15.3 | |
| Get A Degree | 83.2 | 85.8 | 87.6 | 83.3 | 80.7 | |
| Associate's Degree | | | | | 18.1 | |
| Bachelor's Degree | | | | | 55.0 | |
| Master's Degree | | | | | 11.6 | |
| Maintain/Obtain Certification | | | | | 32.9 | |
| Complete Voc/Tech Program | | | | | 11.0 | |
| No Definite Purpose | | | | | 1.6 | |
| No Response | | | | | 0.2 | |
| *Multiple responses were allowed, so percentages exceed 100%. | | | | | | |

Since 1990, the proportion of degree-seeking students has been increasing on UAA campus. In general, any increase in this population is a welcome sign, for it indicates the presence of a more traditional, serious and committed student body. Any shift in proportion of degree-seeking students has far-reaching implications for curriculum, academic programs and other policy issues on campus. Further, in retention studies, degree-seeking students represent cohorts of students for whom the expectation is that they will complete a degree within a given period of time. Often institutional

effectiveness is monitored through the degree completion rates of these students and it is important that once a student declares a degree the student is doing so primarily because he or she plans to get a degree.

In spite of the fact that the number of degree- seeking students has increased over 15% since 1990, widespread enthusiasm over this shift has had to be coupled with caution. It is not clear if a large proportion of students are declaring their intent to pursue a degree because of other reasons, like the priority registration status that accompanies such a declaration. Yet another reason for being a degree-seeking student could be the access it provides to certain kinds of financial aid.

To get to the bottom of this issue of discerning real degree-seeking students from those who are not, the present study included a question on what influences a student's decision to apply for a degree. Table 5 lists the responses of survey participants. Forty-nine percent of the sample clearly did not believe that priority registration or financial aid had influenced their decision to apply for a degree.

Table 5

| Q-2. Was the Decision to Apply for Degree Influenced by Priority Registration or Financial Aid? | | |
|---|-----|------|
| | N | % |
| Very much | 57 | 15.4 |
| Somewhat | 68 | 18.3 |
| Not much | 60 | 16.2 |
| Not at all | 183 | 49.3 |
| No response | 3 | 0.8 |
| Q-2: To receive financial aid, and to have priority status in course registration, a student must be admitted to a degree program. How much did these factors influence your decision to apply for admission to a degree program? | | |

Most of UAA students who declare themselves as "degree-seeking" are not doing so to gain financial aid or priority registration.

Respondents who were not currently enrolled as degree-seeking students were asked if they had considered applying for a degree program. Table 6 has the results to this question. Fifty-two percent of non-degree-seeking students had not considered applying.

Table 6

| Q-3. Have Those Who Are Not In A Degree Program Considered Applying? | | |
|--|----|------|
| | N | % |
| Yes | 69 | 47.3 |
| No | 77 | 52.7 |

The number and type of students with undeclared majors on campus reflect UAA's institutional policy towards exploration. This is one of those issues on which internal dialogue could focus on developing a formal policy towards undecided students.

Based on student responses in Table 6, suggestions for future research would include asking those who have only considered applying for a degree, why they haven't actually applied? Students who were not currently in a degree program and who indicated that they had not considered applying for a program, were asked, why they had not considered applying. Ninety-two students responded and their comments are classified in five categories described in Table 7 below.

Table 7

| Q-3.1. Why Haven't You Considered Applying to a Degree Program? | | |
|---|----|------|
| | N | % |
| Already have a degree | 38 | 41.3 |
| Too old or too young | 7 | 7.6 |
| Not here long enough | 11 | 11.9 |
| Students whose goal was limited to a course or those who knew they didn't want a degree | 17 | 18.4 |
| Students who needed assistance in choosing or declaring a degree program | 14 | 15.2 |
| Others | 5 | 5.4 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Nearly 80% of those students who have not considered applying for a degree are not "undecided." UAA would benefit from focusing on those students with undeclared majors who have, at some point, considered applying for a degree.

Students' reasons for first entering UAA allow us to seek out common traits among students which can guide the development of policies and procedures as they relate to enrollment management.

It is evident from the Table 8 that as few as 21% of UAA's students are the 18 year-old traditional student. Implications for policies and practices include a focus on adults who are problem centered, role bound, part-time, self-directed and have a unique pattern of attendance depending on life circumstances.

The next question attempted to explore some of the reasons students have for entering UAA. Specifically, the survey respondents were asked to select from a list those responses that accurately describes why they first entered UAA. As shown in Table 8, more than half of the respondents had entered UAA after working for a period of time. Further, one-third of the students entered UAA for work-related reasons and continued to work while they were attending UAA. These results point to the presence of an older study body and corroborate other known institutional statistics, e.g. 28 years of age being the median age of UAA Anchorage campus students. Policy implications for the institution include attending to the special needs of older students.

Table 8

| Q-4. | Reasons For First Entering UAA | 'Yes' Response | |
|-------|---|----------------|------|
| | | N | % |
| Q-4.1 | Enter directly from high school | 124 | 21.4 |
| Q-4.2 | Transfer from another college | 122 | 21.0 |
| Q-4.3 | Enter after working for a period of time (including military services and excluding summer work) | 317 | 54.7 |
| Q-4.4 | Enter for work-related reasons and continued to work at the same time | 175 | 30.2 |
| Q-4.5 | Enter after managing a home | 162 | 27.9 |
| Q-4.6 | Enter to continue some aspect of education after completing a degree | 137 | 23.6 |
| Q-4.7 | No response | 0 | 0.0 |
| Q-4. | Of the following list of responses which ones describe your situation when you first enrolled at UAA? (Multiple responses were allowed) | | |

Students' reasons for choosing UAA are of consequence not only to those involved in recruitment and retention but also to all staff and faculty concerned with improving the quality of their service. Results in Table 9 highlight that UAA's location, followed by opportunities to succeed at the institution and students' financial circumstances, are the most frequently stated reasons for choosing UAA.

According to Levin's (1951) model of academic forces, the behavior of students choosing UAA is a "caused behavior." The causes of this behavior are inter-related and vary in strength and direction. The implication for UAA's enrollment management team is that this behavior can be predicted by correctly analyzing the strength and direction of the forces listed in Table 9.

An overwhelming 87% of UAA students state that UAA's location is their reason for choosing the institution.

Table 9

| Q-5. Reasons for Choosing UAA (Students were allowed multiple responses) | | 'Yes' Response N | % |
|--|--|---------------------|------|
| Q-5.1 | Friends attend here | 76 | 13.1 |
| Q-5.2 | Encouraged by family members | 167 | 28.8 |
| Q-5.3 | Recommended by high school counselor | 27 | 4.7 |
| Q-5.4 | Liked UAA's academic reputation | 181 | 31.2 |
| Q-5.5 | Location | 504 | 86.9 |
| Q-5.6 | Financial circumstances | 306 | 52.8 |
| Q-5.7 | Opportunities to succeed | 371 | 64.1 |
| Q-5.8 | Diversity of the student body | 107 | 18.4 |
| Q-5.9 | Students who share cultural background attend here | 118 | 20.3 |
| Q-5.10 | No response | 3 | 0.5 |
| Q-5.11 | Other reasons | 224 | 38.6 |
| Q-5. From the following list of response choices, please indicate ALL of the reasons why You chose to attend UAA. | | | |

For several years the American Council on Education and University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute have compiled attitudes and characteristics of freshmen. Comparing students' reasons for choosing to enroll in post-secondary education nationwide with UAA students' reasons for enrolling, allows for some interesting comparisons. The following Table 10 offers a profile of UAA students and of students enrolled nationwide, as cited in ACE's "The American Freshmen: National Norms, 1993" and the UAA 1996 Spring survey. Even though questions in the UAA survey and ACE study were not identical, Table 10 shows that nationally students' most frequently cited reasons for attending a given college are its academic reputation and/or the fact that graduates get good jobs. In contrast, UAA students overwhelmingly state that location is their main reason for attending UAA, followed by their belief that graduates get good jobs.

Table 10

| A Comparison of Students' Reasons for Choosing to Attend a College: U.S. & UAA | | | U.S. 1993 | UAA 1996 |
|---|--|--|--------------|-------------|
| College has a good academic reputation | | | 49.2 | 31.2 |
| Graduates get good jobs | | | 43.1 | 64.1 |
| Size of college | | | 33.8 | - |
| Offered financial assistance | | | 31.6 | - |
| Low tuition | | | 27.7 | - |
| Financial circumstances | | | - | 52.8 |
| Graduates gain admission to top schools | | | 25.5 | - |
| College offers special educational programs | | | 20.6 | - |
| Wanted to live near home | | | 20.4 | - |
| Relatives wishes | | | 9.4 | 28.8 |
| Diversity of student body | | | - | 20.3 |
| Friends attend here/recommended by Counselor | | | - | 17.8 |
| Location | | | - | 86.9 |

Cost of attending a given school is an important factor in determining whether students choose to attend one school over another. As can be seen in Table 10, nationally 31.6% of the students indicated financial assistance and another 27.7% indicated low tuition as important reasons for attending a given college. Even though the question regarding cost of education was posed to UAA students in a different format, 52.8% of UAA's students believed that financial circumstances played a role in determining whether they attend UAA. To explore the issue of cost further, an attempt was made to compile the average costs of attending college in Alaska and elsewhere. Table 11 has comparative data on cost of education in the U.S. and UAA. A comparison of the cost of tuition and fees at UAA in the U.S. average and in the WICHE states shows that UAA has the lowest tuition rates.

Comparative data indicates that the cost of attending UAA is low and very competitive. However, UAA tuition and fees are high, compared to community colleges. In the 1996 Spring Survey, when 52% of survey respondents refer to financial circumstances as a reason for attending UAA, it is fair to assume that they are referring to UAA's lower cost of attendance.

Table 11

The cost of attending UAA is low and very competitive.

| Average Cost of Attending College in U.S. & UAA, 1995-1996 | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|---------|
| | Average Cost U.S. 4-Year Public Commuter College | UAA Resident Undergraduate Living at Home | WICHE Mean Average | |
| Tuition & Fee | \$2,860 | \$2,150 | | \$2,383 |
| Books and Supplies | 591 | 678 | | |
| Room and Board* | 1,721 | 2,250 | | |
| Transportation | 929 | 1,152 | | |
| Other | 1,348 | 1,341 | | |
| Total | \$7,449 | \$7,571 | | |
| *Room not included for commuter students | | | | |
| Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Sept. 2, 1996. | | | | |
| WICHE. Tuition & Fee in Public Higher Education in the West. 95-96. | | | | |
| UAA Office of Financial Aid | | | | |

Results in Table 12 allow for some comparison of survey participants' responses between the present survey and the student survey administered in 1994. Other than counselor recommendation as a reason for choosing UAA, all other reasons listed in Table 12 are selected by 1996 respondents in significantly greater proportions.

Table 12

| Trends 1994 & 1996: Responses for Attending UAA | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| | 1994 | 1996 |
| | % Selected | % Selected |
| Location | 77.9 | 86.9 |
| Financial circumstances | 45.5 | 52.8 |
| Opportunities to succeed | 18.3 | 35.9 |
| Encouraged by family members | 12.5 | 28.8 |
| Friends attend here | 8.9 | 13.1 |
| UAA's academic reputation | 7.6 | 31.2 |
| Counselor recommendation | 3.3 | 4.7 |
| Diversity of the student body | 2.2 | 18.4 |
| Students who share my cultural background attend here | 1.8 | 20.3 |
| No response | - | 0.5 |
| Any other reason | - | 38.6 |
| Multiple responses were allowed, so percentages exceed 100%. | | |

As shown in Tables 12 and 13, Question 5, concerning reasons why students chose to attend UAA, listed several choices respondents could pick. The last part of the question was open-ended, allowing students to include responses not listed on the questionnaire. Table 13 includes student responses to the open question after their responses were classified into broader categories.

UAA's recruitment, marketing and advertising campaigns should take into account that students perceive UAA as the only option in town.

Table 13

| Q-5.11 Is There Any Other Reason Why You Chose to Attend UAA? | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| | N | % |
| Lower cost | 22 | 9.8 |
| UAA is the only school in town | 59 | 26.3 |
| UAA appeared to be the best school | 19 | 8.5 |
| Students who liked a specific e.g.) Social Work, WAMI, EMT, Education, Paralegal, Distance Ed., etc.) | 6 | 2.7 |
| Others | 118 | 52.7 |
| Total | 224 | 100.0 |

The 118 responses in Table 13 under the "Other" category included such things as UAA meeting their educational needs, given their work and family circumstances. Aspects of personal development were cited frequently. Some respondents mentioned they were here on military bases, making UAA was a natural choice for them. Even interest in the Seawolves and hockey was cited by some as their reasons for attending UAA. Nearly half (118) the comments were specific to given individuals and did not fit any clear pattern. For a listing of students comments in open-ended questions, contact the UAA Office of Institutional Research.

UAA assumes the responsibility of educating students and this does not end at the classroom door. What takes place in the classrooms on campus is but one part of the intellectual and social communities the institution wants to promote. The broader task of the institution is to involve students in the learning enterprise and develop institutional commitment among its students, so as to promote learning throughout life.

Exploring students' goals for the coming Fall semester, Question 6 asked respondents to identify whether they planned to attend during Fall 1996. Results of responses to this question are summarized in Table 14. Seventy-two percent of the students in the sample indicated they were planning on returning the following Fall semester.

Table 14

Of the 420 who indicated they planned to attend in Fall 1996, 70% or 291 actually re-enrolled. Of the 52 who were not sure, 8 of them returned and out of the 108 who indicated they were not planning to attend, 5 changed their minds and re-enrolled after all.

| Q-6. | Do You Plan to Attend UAA During Fall 1996? | | N | % |
|-------|---|--|-----|------|
| Q-6.1 | Yes | | 420 | 72.4 |
| Q-6.2 | No | | 108 | 18.6 |
| Q-6.3 | Not Sure | | 52 | 9.0 |

Results in Table 14, led us to ask whether the 420 students who indicated they planned to return actually re-enrolled in Fall 1996. Cross checking student IDS of the 420 students in the current study with Fall 96 enrollment data, we find that, of the 420 students who indicated they planned to attend in Fall 1996, 70% or 291 actually re-enrolled. Of the 52 who were not sure, eight of them returned and out of the 108 who indicated they were not planning to attend, five changed their minds and re-enrolled after all.

Students not planning to return in Fall 1996 were asked to indicate their reasons for not attending. Table 12 provides the frequency with which students picked a given reason for not returning. The single most cited response (40%) was that of students completing their objective. Moving out of state or going to another college were cited as reasons by more than one-fifth of the sample.

It was hoped that in analyzing student's reasons for not attending, we would come up with a clear picture of the forces mitigating student attrition and academic failure. By identifying those forces, UAA

At the present time, we must temper our enthusiasm for finding a basis for planning in the students' reasons for leaving because their reasons, as listed in Table 16, for the most part, do not reflect institutional obstacles.

planners could begin to have a basis for planning academic support services and directing institutional changes that increase student performance and persistence.

Table 15

| Q-7. | Reasons for Not Attending UAA in Fall 1996 (Students were allowed multiple responses) | 'Yes' Response N | % |
|---------|---|---------------------|------|
| Q-7.1 | Completed objective | 63 | 40.6 |
| Q-7.2 | Going to another college | 43 | 28.1 |
| Q-7.2.a | Alaskan college | 14 | 9.2 |
| Q-7.2.b | Out-of- State | 34 | 22.2 |
| Q-7.3 | Desired courses not available | 28 | 18.4 |
| Q-7.4 | Desired degree program not available | 23 | 15.0 |
| Q-7.5 | Disappointed in UAA | 20 | 13.1 |
| Q-7.6 | Financially unable to attend | 15 | 9.9 |
| Q-7.7 | Moving out of the state | 34 | 22.2 |
| Q-7.8 | Other reasons | 61 | 39.6 |
| Q-7. | From the following list of response choices, please indicate ALL of the reasons why you chose not to attend UAA in Fall 1996. | | |

The next question on the survey asked survey respondents to identify how UAA can assist them in enrolling for Fall 1996. Out of the 160 students who were either not returning or not certain about their intentions, only 48 used this opportunity to describe institutional help that would be useful to them.

Common themes in students' comments revolved around the following:

- Students would like academic programs to be tailored to their needs.

Some examples cited were those for a Ph.D. in Economics, a wildlife degree, a MS in Nutrition, a MS in Computer Science, etc.

- Some comments revolved around how new institutional policies and services could be developed or suggested modifying existing practices:

Suggestions included such things as mailing catalogs and other course information, offering classes at convenient times, providing better advising etc. Some students mentioned that they need assistance in signing up for classes. Still other students advocated bringing more speakers on campus and offering weekend courses.

- Voicing financial concerns was another common theme:

A student suggested that UAA develop a program for free tuition in exchange for teaching classes. Other students noted that tuition should not be raised. One of the suggestions was for UAA to consider offering scholarships in exchange for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Other comments pointed out the need for part-time jobs and loans.

- Some students believed that UAA could not assist them in re-enrolling.

Out of 48 students who responded, 13 specifically stated that UAA can not assist them in re-enrolling.

PART II - SERVICES AND FACILITIES AT UAA

Survey Results and Discussion

UAA promotes student success by maintaining a strong emphasis on faculty excellence and student services. This section of the survey addresses measures that can be taken to improve campus life and access to UAA, particularly in the area of Student Services. In other words, questions posed to survey respondents dealt with evaluating the University environment outside of the formal academic settings of classrooms and labs. Students had an opportunity to comment on the services, facilities and policies that support scheduling of classes, enrollment, retention, social, cultural and other academic support services which complement intellectual development.

Results in Table 16 and 17 provide significant insights into enhancing our understanding of those UAA services perceived by students as either central or peripheral to their academic success. Table 16 provides a frequency count of students' responses to the question measuring the extent to which several UAA services and facilities are helpful. Table 17 translates the frequency counts listed in the previous table into percentages. Taken together, both the percentage and the actual number of students selecting a given response allow for a meaningful interpretation of results.

Successful academic support programs at UAA should "de-mystify" the university experience, decode the campus environment, diagnose student readiness and develop academic preparedness for our student body.

UAA publications such as the catalog and course schedule reach 90% of the students. The implication for planners is that these publications have the potential to be used as a means for promoting other academic issues.

Table 16

| Q-9. UAA Services and Facilities (Responses in Numbers) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|------------|---|-------|---|
| | | Very Much | | Some-Not Much | | Didn't Use | | Total | |
| | | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Q-9.1 | Advising and Counseling Center | 90 | 122 | 82 | 261 | 22 | | | |
| Q-9.2 | Psychological Services | 5 | 9 | 14 | 407 | 142 | | | |
| Q-9.3 | New Student Orientation | 32 | 48 | 22 | 424 | 52 | | | |
| Q-9.4 | Faculty Advisors | 130 | 115 | 69 | 235 | 27 | | | |
| Q-9.5 | Tutors | 39 | 31 | 30 | 459 | 19 | | | |
| Q-9.6 | Learning Resources Center | 126 | 144 | 43 | 235 | 29 | | | |
| Q-9.7 | Consortium Library | 214 | 200 | 45 | 115 | 4 | | | |
| Q-9.8 | Reading-Writing Center | 54 | 63 | 36 | 361 | 62 | | | |
| Q-9.9 | Financial Aid Services | 115 | 81 | 44 | 333 | 3 | | | |
| Q-9.10 | Publications: UAA Catalog, Course Schedule, etc. | 341 | 174 | 33 | 28 | 0 | | | |
| Q-9.11 | Campus Center | 97 | 192 | 84 | 199 | 6 | | | |
| Q-9.12 | Sports Center | 93 | 117 | 57 | 310 | 1 | | | |
| Q-9.13 | Campus Housing | 18 | 11 | 4 | 539 | 6 | | | |
| Q-9.14 | Bookstore | 230 | 253 | 48 | 44 | 0 | | | |
| Q-9.15 | On-Campus Student Employment | 33 | 26 | 11 | 466 | 41 | | | |
| Q-9.16 | Minority Student Services | 16 | 13 | 13 | 505 | 31 | | | |
| Q-9.17 | Native Student Services | 13 | 14 | 10 | 509 | 32 | | | |
| Q-9.18 | Disability Support Services | 12 | 5 | 8 | 518 | 34 | | | |
| Q-9.19 | Computer Labs | 151 | 125 | 40 | 249 | 11 | | | |
| Q-9 | For each UAA services or facility please indicate how much the service helped you. | | | | | | | | |

The single most popular item on the list of services and facilities in Table 16 appears to be UAA publications, such as catalog, course schedule, student handbook, etc. Approximately 90% of students polled indicated the publications were either somewhat or very helpful. The other services and facilities popular with students were: Bookstore, Library, Campus Center, Learning Resource Center, computer labs and faculty advisors.

Services and Facilities popular with students are: Bookstore, Consortium Library, Campus Center, Learning Resource Center, computer labs, and faculty advisors.

Table 17

| Q-9. | UAA Services and Facilities (Response in Percentages) | Very Some- Not Didn't Total | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | | Much | what | Much | Use | Know | |
| | | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Q-9.1 | Advising and Counseling Center | 15.6 | 21.1 | 14.2 | 45.2 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.2 | Psychological Services | 0.9 | 1.6 | 2.4 | 70.5 | 24.6 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.3 | New Student Orientation | 5.5 | 8.3 | 3.8 | 73.4 | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.4 | Faculty Advisors | 22.6 | 20.0 | 12 | 40.8 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.5 | Tutors | 6.7 | 5.4 | 5.2 | 79.4 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.6 | Learning Resources Center | 21.8 | 25.0 | 7.5 | 40.7 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.7 | Consortium Library | 37.0 | 34.6 | 7.8 | 19.9 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.8 | Reading-Writing Center | 9.4 | 10.9 | 6.3 | 62.7 | 10.8 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.9 | Financial Aid Services | 20 | 14.1 | 7.6 | 57.8 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.10 | Publications: UAA Catalog, Course Schedule, etc. | 59.2 | 30.2 | 5.7 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.11 | Campus Center | 16.8 | 33.2 | 14.5 | 34.4 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.12 | Sports Center | 16.1 | 20.2 | 9.9 | 53.6 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.13 | Campus Housing | 3.1 | 1.9 | 0.7 | 93.3 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.14 | Bookstore | 40 | 44.0 | 8.3 | 7.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.15 | On-Campus Student Employment | 5.7 | 4.5 | 1.9 | 80.8 | 7.1 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.16 | Minority Student Services | 2.8 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 87.4 | 5.4 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.17 | Native Student Services | 2.2 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 88.1 | 5.5 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.18 | Disability Support Services | 2.1 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 89.8 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| Q-9.19 | Computer Labs | 26.2 | 21.7 | 6.9 | 43.2 | 1.9 | 100.0 |
| Q-9 | For each UAA services or facility please indicate how much the service helped you. | | | | | | |

The above question on the survey asking students to evaluate UAA services and facilities has the distinction of being one of the few questions that have been asked in almost the same format in all student surveys administered on campus. The only difference in methodology associated with the comparative data available on this question, has to do with the fact that this year's Spring Survey was

conducted via telephone interview. Previous surveys were administered in UAA classrooms. Table 18 provides the proportion of student responses indicating that a given service or facility was very helpful. In comparing trends on student evaluations, it appears that in 1996, the Campus Center and Sport Center were not perceived as being as helpful as they have been in the past. Furthermore, the usefulness of UAA publications, Advising and Counseling Center and Faculty Advisor appears to have improved substantially.

Table 18

| Trends 1991-1996: Student Evaluation of UAA Services and Facilities | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | 1991 | | 1992 | | 1993 | | 1994 | | 1996 | | |
| | Use | Very | Use | Very | Use | Very | Use | Very | Use | Very | |
| | Much | % | Much | % | Much | % | Much | % | Much | % | |
| Advising And Counseling Center | | 9.0 | | 10.1 | | 8.4 | | 12.8 | | 15.6 | |
| Psychological Services Center* | | 3.0 | | 1.3 | | 1.3 | | 2.0 | | 0.9 | |
| New Student Orientation Center | | 6.7 | | 4.7 | | 4.7 | | 6.3 | | 5.5 | |
| Faculty Advisors | | 13.5 | | 14.5 | | 12.5 | | 16.8 | | 22.6 | |
| Tutors | | 6.9 | | 6.8 | | 6.1 | | 9.2 | | 6.7 | |
| Learning Resources Center | | 25.6 | | 22.5 | | 22.0 | | 24.1 | | 21.8 | |
| Consortium Library | | 33.5 | | 36.2 | | 36.4 | | 35.3 | | 37.0 | |
| Reading/Writing Center | | 12.3 | | 11.3 | | 8.8 | | 13.6 | | 9.4 | |
| Financial Aid Services | | 23.3 | | 22.5 | | 20.7 | | 21.3 | | 20.0 | |
| Publications | | 48.3 | | 51.7 | | 50.1 | | 46.6 | | 59.2 | |
| Campus Center | | 22.7 | | 23.1 | | 22.1 | | 23.6 | | 16.8 | |
| Sports Center | | 24.5 | | 22.8 | | 20.1 | | 22.2 | | 16.1 | |
| Campus Housing | | 5.4 | | 6.2 | | 5.0 | | 5.1 | | 3.1 | |
| Bookstore | | 43.1 | | 41.9 | | 41.2 | | 38.5 | | 40 | |
| On-Campus Employment | | 6.2 | | 6.8 | | 5.8 | | 7.1 | | 5.7 | |
| Minority Student Services | | 2.0 | | 3.1 | | 2.4 | | 3.0 | | 2.8 | |
| Native Student Services | | 2.9 | | 3.0 | | 3.1 | | 3.0 | | 2.2 | |
| Disability Support Services | | | | 1.0 | | 0.9 | | 2.0 | | 2.1 | |
| Center For Women And Men | | 1.1 | | 1.2 | | 0.9 | | | | | |
| Computer Training Seminars | | 2.1 | | 1.5 | | 1.9 | | | | | |
| Computer Labs | | | | | | | | | | 26.2 | |

In 1996, the Campus Center and Sports Center are not perceived as being as helpful as they have been in the past.

In discussing the effectiveness of an advising delivery system for UAA, we recognize that when everyone is responsible for advising, no one is accountable.

The advising process facilitates the development of mutually beneficial relationships between students and faculty. The fact that 52% of UAA's students academic advising needs are met by faculty is on target.

The next question on the survey addressed the issue of academic advising on campus. The goal of academic advising is to assist students in developing educational plans consistent with career/life goals and to provide students with the information and skills necessary to pursue these goals. At UAA, this goal of academic advisement is taken very seriously and the Spring Survey included questions designed to shed some light on how effective the University is in ensuring that appropriate advising is available to all who need it.

Table 19

| Q-10. | Who Met Your Academic Advising Needs? (Students were allowed multiple responses) | 'Yes' Response | |
|--------|---|----------------|------|
| | | N | % |
| Q-10.1 | Faculty Advisors | 300 | 51.9 |
| Q-10.2 | Counseling Advisors | 181 | 31.3 |
| Q-10.3 | Enrollment Advisors | 118 | 20.4 |
| Q-10.4 | Other Staff Advisors | 107 | 18.5 |
| Q-10. | Who do you seek to meet your advising needs? Was it: | | |

Table 19 provides a summary of student responses to the question of who was meeting their advising needs. Over half the students surveyed indicated that they utilize their faculty advisors: 31.3% mentioned counseling advisors: 20.4% mentioned enrollment advisors, and, finally 18.5% named other staff advisors. There is no benchmarking data on what would be considered a good or bad distribution of advising effort for various advisors on campus. In general, the more actively that faculty participate in the advisement of students, the greater the chances of academic success for our students. However, given UAA's community college mission, the fact that over one-third of UAA's students are undeclared, and UAA's reliance on part-time adjunct faculty, it is difficult to find a scale on which to measure appropriateness of advising effort.

In addition to asking students who was advising them, we also asked if they felt that their advising needs had been met. Results in Table 20 point out that 80% of UAA's student body believes that their advising needs have been met. These results raise more questions than they provide answers for the issue of academic advising. On UAA campus, frequently cited factors such as non-traditional students, changing demographics, pressures on cost and length of time to degree completion, curricular complexity, and breadth of institutional mission all point to the need for making academic advising an institutional priority. It is commonly believed, by both faculty and administrators, that on UAA campus, students need more timely and effective advising. Results in Table 20 are contrary to this belief and raise concerns that would justify further in-depth investigation. UAA students as consumers can be expected to be conscious of the value received for each dollar spent. There is no reason to believe that they expect less from academic advising than what is due to them.

Table 20

| Q-11. | Were Your Academic Advising Needs Met? | |
|-------|--|------|
| | N | % |
| Yes | 453 | 79.9 |
| No | 114 | 20.1 |

The 114 students, accounting for 20.1% of survey respondents, who mentioned that their advising needs were not met, were asked "Why their needs were not met?" Here these students had an opportunity to respond to an open ended question. This format allows students an opportunity to express individual variations in expressing their needs. Comments of students who described why their advising needs had not been met, were analyzed and results revealed several clusters of needs.

Following is a listing of clusters to which the comments were grouped:

- (1) Academic advising needs were not met due to institutional barriers.

Students report that advising responsibilities are unclear in the institution. Specifically, they point out that is difficult to tell who one needs to see for what particular type of student need. Students mentioned that role confusion exists with faculty, counseling and enrollment advisors. Further, UAA's referral system is poorly designed--students find it difficult to determine where to go next.

Some student comments stated that there are difficulties with scheduling advising appointments, especially with faculty and counseling advisors. Special needs of students are not met in some areas; for instance, graduate advising or advising students who are seeking multiple degrees.
- (2) Several academic advising needs were not met due to the quality of the academic advising relationships between advisors and students.

Examples include such things as, inadequate time provided by advisors, advisors not being knowledgeable of institutional policies and procedures and advisors providing misinformation resulting in a negative impact on students. Other students cited the negative attitudes of advisors - "condescending," "blaming others," etc. A strong theme among some comments was that advisors were, in general, "not helpful."
- (3) Some student responses pointed out that their needs were not met due to their own choices or actions.

At times students did not know where to receive academic advising and therefore chose not to seek it. Still others knew of academic advising services but chose not to use them. Furthermore, there are students who chose to find unique sources of academic advising on their own or seek help from peers and family.

The next few tables provide informative data on UAA students preferences in scheduling of classes, instructional delivery, interest in weekend college and housing needs. Data in these tables allows us to better understand student preferences on when and where academic programs are delivered. Use of this information allows the process of enrollment planning to be better informed in delivering quality education at times and places that UAA students find convenient.

Even though UAA's students prefer traditional classrooms, in the long run, the technological revolution will combine with continuing economic pressures to restructure aspects of curriculum, leading to improvement both in quality and in efficiency.

"While collegiate faculties have led technological innovation in the research arena, we have yet to see the same level of experimentation within instructional technology in the classroom."

A Slow Revolution Speeds Up, CHANGE, March/April 1996.

Table 21

| Q-12. | Preferences in Instructional Delivery | 'Yes' Response N | % |
|--------|---|---------------------|------|
| Q-12.1 | Traditional classroom instruction | 403 | 70.5 |
| Q-12.2 | Telecourse | 12 | 2.1 |
| Q-12.3 | Whatever is available at the time | 97 | 17.0 |
| Q-12.4 | No preference | 60 | 10.5 |
| Q-12. | UAA offers instruction in traditional classroom settings and through telecourses. Telecourses are those courses offered via cable/television. Which ONE of the following do you prefer? | | |

Table 21, summarizes survey respondents preferences in instructional delivery. Data in Table 21 overwhelmingly point to the fact that UAA students (70.5%) prefer instruction in traditional classrooms. An additional 27.5% either have no preference or will enroll in any type of class that is available at the time. In spite of the fact that UAA has a large non-traditional student population, student's preferences for instructional delivery continue to be traditional classroom settings.

It is clear that UAA students do not exhibit a readiness for distance learning programs. In support of UAA students, it should be pointed out that there is a missing link in the explosion of technology in higher education. This missing phase is the lack of high quality, high volume, academic content in courses delivered via telecommunications. On the other hand, UAA needs to stimulate and incorporate organizational change if it wants to stay competitive in the 21st century. The following quote sums up UAA's concerns with regard to instructional technology:

"Campuses that find ways to utilize technology to improve academic and administrative productivity and, most importantly student learning, will reap rewards, and those that do not will be at risk. Technology has the potential to improve and expand instruction, turning faculty attention to student learning..."

A Picaresque Journey: Corporate Change, Technological Tidal Waves, and Webby World Views. CHANGE, (p. 37), March/April 1996.

The next few questions on the survey were designed to assess the needs of older students. For a variety of reasons, ranging from enrollment management to a concern for our community college mission, UAA planners have historically attempted to be responsive to the needs of older students. Literature on older students have several traits such as not accepting the apprentice role. They insist on sharing their experiences, ask for child care, complain about not having classes on weekend and threaten to leave before their liberal arts education sequence is complete - and of course they take their tuition with them. In addressing the needs of these students, the present survey included a question on student preferences for time and day in taking classes.

Table 22

| Time of Day When Students Prefer NOT to Take Classes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | | | | | |
| | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | | | | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 315 | 312 | 313 | 314 | 318 | 287 | 296 | | | | | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 163 | 161 | 162 | 164 | 167 | 164 | 173 | | | | | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 184 | 184 | 184 | 185 | 189 | 231 | 241 | | | | | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | | | | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 54.3 | 53.8 | 54 | 54.1 | 54.8 | 49.5 | 51 | | | | | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 28.1 | 27.8 | 27.9 | 28.3 | 28.8 | 28.3 | 29.8 | | | | | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 31.7 | 31.7 | 31.7 | 31.9 | 32.6 | 39.8 | 41.6 | | | | | |

UAA students do not want to take courses in the morning. More information is needed to determine what this preference indicates. On the other hand, the preference for taking courses on the weekends reflect the desire on the part of students' to maintain other social roles such as those of workers or family members.

Table 22 reports student responses regarding when students prefer not to take classes. The reason for asking students when they prefer not to take classes, rather than when they prefer to take classes, was primarily because the survey was conducted over the phone. A telephone survey did not lend itself easily to providing the respondent a matrix that included boxes to check, with days of the week on X axis and several time slots on the Y axis. To simplify the question on the phone, time slots were grouped into morning, day, and evening, and respondents were asked to indicate only those times of the day when they preferred not to take classes.

Survey results show that weekend mornings and afternoons were as popular as weekday mornings and afternoons for enrolling in classes.

Results show that, in general, students would prefer not to take classes in the morning. A consistently popular time to offer class is during the day and evenings. Only 28% to 32% of those surveyed appeared to find classes offered during the day and evenings inconvenient. Even though Saturday and Sunday evenings were relatively less popular than evenings during the rest of the week, the real surprise was that weekends appear almost as popular as weekdays.

Student surveys conducted on campus since 1991 have included a question on students' preferences regarding time and day for taking classes. In previous surveys, instead of the three options (morning, day and evening) used in 1996, students had the opportunity to select from six time periods during the day. The 6 time periods were early morning (7:00 AM - 8:30 AM), morning (8:30 AM -12:00 PM), noon hour (12:00 PM - 1:00 PM), afternoon (1:00 PM - 5:30 PM), early evening (5:30 - 7:00 PM) and evening (7:00 PM -10:00 PM). For the purpose of comparing 1996 student responses on day and time preference with that of previous years, data from previous surveys was collapsed into morning, day and evening categories. Trends for UAA student preferences in day and times for taking classes is listed in Table 23.

As seen in Table 23, the Spring 1996 responses differ significantly from trends in 1991, 1992 and 1993. In 1996, fewer students indicated that they preferred taking Monday through Thursday classes in the morning as compared to previous years. Further, in 1996 a significantly greater proportion of students had a preference for taking courses, during all times of the day, including Saturday and Sunday.

Table 23

| Preferred Time for Taking Classes | | | SPRING 1996 | | | | | | |
|--|------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|--|
| | Mon | % Tue | % Wed | % Thur | % Fri | % Sat | % Sun | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 45.7 | | 46.2 | 46.0 | 45.9 | 45.2 | 50.5 | 49.0 | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 71.9 | | 72.2 | 72.1 | 71.7 | 71.2 | 71.7 | 70.2 | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 68.3 | | 68.3 | 68.3 | 68.1 | 67.4 | 60.2 | 58.4 | |
| Preferred Time for Taking Classes | | | SPRING 1993 | | | | | | |
| | Mon | % Tue | % Wed | % Thur | % Fri | % Sat | % Sun | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 64.9 | | 65.3 | 66.1 | 63.9 | 33.6 | 17.3 | 8.8 | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 85.7 | | 85.7 | 87.3 | 83.7 | 40.8 | 18.0 | 10.6 | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 60 | | 61.3 | 61.0 | 60.1 | 37 | 14.5 | 10.3 | |
| Preferred Time for Taking Classes | | | SPRING 1992 | | | | | | |
| | Mon | % Tue | % Wed | % Thur | % Fri | % Sat | % Sun | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 67.5 | | 68.4 | 67.8 | 67.4 | 34 | 15.2 | 7 | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 90.5 | | 91.3 | 91.2 | 90.3 | 42.6 | 15.6 | 9 | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 58 | | 58.7 | 58.9 | 58.3 | 33.5 | 11.9 | 7.9 | |
| Preferred Time for Taking Classes | | | SPRING 1991 | | | | | | |
| | Mon | % Tue | % Wed | % Thur | % Fri | % Sat | % Sun | | |
| Morning (7:00 AM - 11:30 AM) | 63.6 | | 63.9 | 64.7 | 63.3 | 34.6 | 14.6 | 6.2 | |
| Day (12:00 PM - 5:00 PM) | 82.6 | | 83.2 | 83.3 | 82.2 | 39.4 | 14.4 | 8 | |
| Evening (5:30 PM - 10:00 PM) | 50.9 | | 50.7 | 51.7 | 50 | 30 | 10.4 | 7.6 | |
| Multiple responses were allowed, so percentages exceed 100%. | | | | | | | | | |

These differences can be attributed to three main factors:

- Real shifts in preferred time for taking classes in the UAA student body. In the past five years, UAA students have, in significant proportions, moved towards enrolling full-time and declaring an intent to seek degrees. The proportion of special undergraduates or non-degree-seeking students has declined 14% between 1991 and 1996 (see Table 24). The proportion of students who enrolled in an occasional class (0-3 credit hours) is down and the proportion of seniors and juniors is on the rise. All these indicators point to a changing profile of UAA students and could well be the reason for the reported shift in student preferences for time and day for taking courses.

- Differences in question format between the 1996 survey and previous surveys (3 time slots in a day to pick from the 1996 survey vs. six time slots in the previous surveys).
- Differences in survey methodology (telephone survey vs. in-class administration of a questionnaire).

Table 24

| Shifts in UAA-Anchorage Campus Students' Class Standing (1990-1996) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| That Correspond With Trends in Survey Results | | | | | | | | | |
| SPRING SEMESTER OPENING DATA | | | | | | | | | |
| ANCHORAGE CAMPUS | | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 91 - 96 | |
| CLASS STANDING | | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total | Difference % | |
| Freshman | | 16.5% | 18.7% | 19.2% | 18.2% | 18.1% | 18.7% | 2.2% | |
| Sophomore | | 10.3% | 11.5% | 11.8% | 12.5% | 12.3% | 12.4% | 2.1% | |
| Junior | | 8.5% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 11.2% | 10.3% | 10.6% | 2.0% | |
| Senior | | 13.2% | 15.5% | 17.0% | 18.8% | 20.2% | 19.8% | 6.6% | |
| Special Undergraduate | | 48.2% | 41.5% | 37.8% | 35.1% | 34.2% | 33.5% | -14.7% | |
| Master | | 3.3% | 3.5% | 4.1% | 4.2% | 5.0% | 5.0% | 1.7% | |

To pursue further UAA students interests in weekend college, we should include in the next survey, a question on whether students prefer less frequent meetings. Research shows that less frequent meetings, for example, once a week or bi-weekly, are associated with higher persistence rates for older students.

UAA students' desire to enroll in weekend college is consistent with the needs of students who are older and can be considered "returning learners." The median age for Anchorage campus students is 28 years, and the fact that our students are older students does not come as a surprise to anyone. In general, older students are part-time students - UAA's student body is 64% part-time. Some theorists like Marienau and Chickering (1982, p. 10) in New Directions for Experiential Learning note that, "Adults should be viewed as part-time learners regardless of their credit load."

Table 25

| Q-14. | Interest in Weekend College? | N | % |
|--------|---|-----|------|
| Q-14.1 | Yes | 316 | 54.9 |
| Q-14.2 | No | 194 | 33.7 |
| Q-14.3 | Maybe | 66 | 11.5 |
| Q-14. | UAA is looking at the possibility of offering weekend college. Would you be interested? | | |

Low group identity and limited affiliation with UAA on the part of students make it difficult to organize the commuter student as a strong constituency group on campus.

UAA's Anchorage campus is primarily an urban commuter university with over 13,000 students enrolled in classes on campus. Currently, UAA offers on-campus housing to only 7% of its full-time enrollment. New housing construction is underway and, on completion, it will increase campus housing to 15% of UAA's full-time enrollment. Other urban universities have housing capacities of 30% to 50% of full-time enrollment. It would be fair to say that so far UAA students have not had the luxury of deriving any educational benefits associated with residence halls. Chickering (1974), in his book *Commuting Versus Resident Students: Overcoming the Educational Inequities of Living Off Campus*, concluded, "...even when background variables are held constant, students living in residence halls (1) exceed the learning and personal development predicted for them; (2) are more fully involved in academic and extra curricular activities with other students; and (3) earn higher GPAs."

To build on this relationship between residential living and student success, Chancellor Gorsuch has set the goal of having 2,500 students housing units on or near campus by the year 2005.

Table 26

| Q-15. Do You Currently Live in Campus Housing? | | |
|--|-----|------|
| | N | % |
| Yes | 17 | 2.9 |
| No | 560 | 97.1 |

The present study asked students to state if they currently live in campus housing and if they would choose to live on-campus, if housing were available at reasonable prices. Table 26 and 27 list students' responses to the question.

Table 27

| Q-16. If More Campus Housing Was Available at Reasonable Price, Would You Live on Campus? | | | |
|---|-------|-----|------|
| | | N | % |
| Q-16.1 | Yes | 85 | 15.2 |
| Q-16.2 | No | 442 | 79.1 |
| Q-16.3 | Maybe | 32 | 5.7 |

Current UAA students show no interest in on-campus housing, because Alaskan students who wanted to live in residence halls enrolled elsewhere.

UAA has lost potential enrollment of students in significant numbers, because on-campus housing is currently not available.

Approximately 3% of the those surveyed lived on campus. Furthermore, 79.1% of the students indicated they would not opt for campus housing, even if it were available and priced reasonably. At first glance, this response comes as a surprise, because it is a well documented fact that on-campus housing is particularly important for freshmen and sophomores who require direct access to faculty, classes, libraries and student activities to ease their college transition. Fifteen percent of UAA student headcount translates into 2,100 students (i.e. 15% of 14,000) with an interest in on-campus housing.

These are Alaskan students who would benefit from residence halls. However, at the present time, they have been forced to enroll elsewhere. UAA loses students who want to be on a residential campus because these students chose to attend other schools in the State or in the Lower 48.

In general, commuting students form a growing majority of undergraduates in this country. Their numbers are likely to grow, as residential costs rise and as the rapidity of change in our society forces us all to become lifelong learners. The problem at UAA is the almost complete lack of housing for even those students in UAA's service area who might benefit from attending a residential campus.

According to the Accreditation Handbook published by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), there are certain conditions and principles that characterize educational effectiveness in post-secondary institutions. In developing the survey for the present study, particular attention was devoted to those areas which NASC would deem important in the assessment of quality, as it relates to the education of UAA students. The Accreditation Handbook states that, due to the diversity of institutional purpose and the processes for achieving those purposes, the standards for assessing institutional effectiveness are qualitative, rather than quantitative. To address some of these qualitative issues, we asked survey respondents in the present study to evaluate their satisfaction with several aspects of their overall UAA experience.

Survey results show clearly and definitely that students have high confidence in UAA faculty as being effective in helping them realize their goals.

Table 28

| Satisfaction with Overall UAA Experiences (Response in Frequencies) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------|---------|------|------|------|-----------|------|---------------|------|
| | Very Satisfied | | Neutral | | Dis- | | Very Dis- | | Doesn't Apply | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Quality of faculty | 163 | 56.2 | 324 | 10.2 | 59 | 1.8 | 22 | 0.7 | 6 | 0.2 |
| Out-of-class availability of faculty | 107 | 28.2 | 288 | 18.5 | 74 | 10.2 | 52 | 3.8 | 13 | 1.0 |
| Attitude of faculty toward students | 184 | 49.8 | 306 | 12.8 | 48 | 1.8 | 18 | 0.9 | 14 | 0.7 |
| Attitude of non-teaching staff toward | 93 | 32.1 | 263 | 53.3 | 94 | 8.4 | 30 | 3.1 | 13 | 1.4 |
| Availability of courses when wanted | 52 | 16.1 | 206 | 45.5 | 92 | 16.3 | 154 | 5.2 | 64 | 2.2 |
| Registration procedures | 149 | 9.0 | 284 | 35.6 | 52 | 15.9 | 63 | 26.6 | 27 | 11.1 |
| Buildings and grounds | 145 | 25.8 | 336 | 49.1 | 51 | 9.0 | 17 | 10.9 | 9 | 4.7 |
| Quality of overall education | 129 | 22.4 | 353 | 61.4 | 60 | 10.4 | 26 | 4.5 | 3 | 0.5 |

Satisfaction with Overall UAA Experiences (Response in Percentages)

| | Very Satisfied | | Neutral | | Dis- | | Very Dis- | | Doesn't Apply | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------|---------|------|------|------|-----------|---|---------------|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Quality of faculty | 28.2 | 56.2 | 10.2 | 3.8 | 1.0 | 0.5 | | | | |
| Out-of-class availability of faculty | 18.5 | 49.8 | 12.8 | 9.0 | 2.2 | 7.6 | | | | |
| Attitude of faculty toward students | 32.1 | 53.3 | 8.4 | 3.1 | 2.4 | 0.7 | | | | |
| Attitude of non-teaching staff toward | 16.1 | 45.5 | 16.3 | 5.2 | 2.2 | 14.7 | | | | |
| Availability of courses when wanted | 9.0 | 35.6 | 15.9 | 26.6 | 11.1 | 1.7 | | | | |
| Registration procedures | 25.8 | 49.1 | 9.0 | 10.9 | 4.7 | 0.5 | | | | |
| Buildings and grounds | 25.1 | 58.1 | 8.8 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 3.5 | | | | |
| Quality of overall education | 22.4 | 61.4 | 10.4 | 4.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 | | | | |

Survey results in Table 28 summarize student responses with regard to the totality of their educational experience. In the final analysis, it is the effectiveness of faculty teaching and student learning that determine the quality of education that students receive at UAA. The first three items in Table 28 deal

with dimensions of satisfaction related to the quality, out-of-class availability and attitude of faculty towards students. Survey results show clearly and definitively that students have high confidence in UAA's faculty as being effective in helping them realize their educational goals. Over 80% of UAA's students are either very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of faculty and the attitudes of faculty towards students. Nearly 70% of students are very satisfied or satisfied with the out-of-class availability of faculty. For several reasons, these results are very reassuring for those involved with institutional assessment. Student satisfaction with faculty, as demonstrated in Table 28, is a result of conscious and deliberate efforts to improve, that were undertaken in the past. Therefore, the overwhelming satisfaction of students with the institutions faculty justifies our efforts to promote and enhance teaching excellence.

Results in Table 28 draw our attention to other issues where making institutional improvements is in order. Included here is the availability of courses when students need them. An in-depth assessment of the types of courses that students need and the frequency with which such courses can be offered might be a useful starting point in addressing the problem.

Table 28 provides trend data on student satisfaction with overall educational experience at UAA, as expressed in the current study and previous surveys. Overall, in 1996 UAA students express a far greater level of satisfaction on all dimensions of satisfaction included in the study.

PART III - CHARACTERISTICS OF UAA STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK

Survey Results and Discussion

At UAA, we recruit adult learners, under-prepared, at-risk students and support part-time working students. In the process of providing open-access and open-enrollment, the institution attracts students who vary on several traits. UAA's students vary in background, future aspirations and abilities, motivation and academic skills. This section of the report presents a discussion of survey results that identify our at-risk students and documents the extent of their needs. This data allows UAA to make special adjustments to local programs, institutional structure and policies that accommodate the needs of such students. The data also allows UAA to document student need for the purpose of applying for Federal funds that are available on a competitive basis. Often a prerequisite for qualifying for certain State or Federal grants is based on serving a given proportion of minority and at-risk students.

As shown in Table 30, one characteristic of UAA students that places them at-risk, has to do with the fact that 42.4% of them have re-entered higher education after a lapse of 5 to 10 years. An additional 23.4% are at even greater risk as they are re-enrolling after 11 or more years.

65.5% of UAA's students have re-enrolled in higher education after a lapse of at least 5 years. Now, more than ever before, at UAA, in the creation of the College of Technical and Community Education, we have reaffirmed our commitment to providing education that is life relevant and addresses the needs of returning students.

UAA returning learners are not an isolated special interest group on campus. In fact, they represent UAA's niche among those in Alaska who are seeking higher education.

Table 30

| Characteristics of At-Risk Students Enrolled at UAA | | | |
|--|---|-----|------|
| Q-18. | | N | % |
| Q-18.1 | Single parent | 64 | 11.1 |
| Q-18.2 | Re-entry in higher education after 5 to 10 years | 245 | 42.4 |
| Q-18.3 | Re-entry in higher education after 11 years or more | 135 | 23.4 |
| Q-18.4 | Student with non-traditional learning styles | 43 | 7.5 |
| Q-18.5 | Student with low ACT/SAT or ASSET scores | 55 | 10.0 |
| Q-18.6 | Limited English-speaking student | 16 | 2.8 |
| Q-18.7 | Student with physical, communicative, mental or learning disability | 28 | 4.8 |
| Q-18.8 | Other | 44 | 7.6 |
| Q18. At UAA we take pride in offering open access by supporting both degree and non-degree seeking students. We recruit adult learners, under-prepared students, at-risk students, and support part-time working students. Please assist us in identifying your needs by indicating which of the following characteristics apply to you. | | | |

In retrospect, it was inappropriate to include the question on re-entry into higher education within the context of identifying at-risk factors for students. Returning learners are not an isolated special interest group on campus. In fact, they are the inspiration behind the recently created, second largest college at UAA. The new Community and Technical College creates a heightened presence for UAA's community college and vocational education mission. The role of this College in meeting the needs of returning students is:

- To offer one- and two-year certificates and degrees for students who are seeking skilled, meaningful employment;
- To offer credit and non-credit professional continuing education for employed persons or employers wanting to improve job skills;
- To offer a wide range of general education courses and degree programs at fourteen off-campus and office centers;

- To offer adult basic education and developmental courses in basic skills.
- To offer community education courses in a wide range of personal enrichment topics.

UAA's Community and Technical College, in its programs and services, incorporates nearly all strategies found in literature, for removing barriers for returning learners. The College has employed flexible curriculum and scheduling in offering instruction, modified recruitment strategies and offered entirely new degree programs. In its very existence, this College represents a consolidated division, with great scope and complexity, devoted to the adult returning student.

The next question on the survey attempted to measure the educational aspirations of UAA's students. Results in Table 31 show that 44% of those who enroll at UAA hope to obtain a bachelor's degree in the next five years. An additional 34.3% aspire to complete a master's degree. The last column in Table 31, Primary Degree Sought by Currently Enrolled UAA Students, allows for a comparison between student's aspirations and their currently declared intentions to pursue degree programs. This comparison highlights two points. First, while only 5.3% of UAA students are currently enrolled in master's programs, 34.3% aspire to obtain a master's in the near future. Second, 35.3% of UAA students who are undeclared have aspirations to complete degrees.

Students enrolled at UAA, aspire to complete Masters programs. Expanding UAA's graduate school would be in line with meeting the higher education needs of Alaska's residents.

Table 31

| Q-19. Survey Respondents' Highest Degree Aspired During the Next Five Years & Primary Degree Sought by Currently Enrolled UAA Students | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------|
| | Spring 1996 Survey Respondents | Primary Degree Sought by Currently Enrolled UAA Students | |
| | N | % | % |
| Q-19.1 High School/GED | - | - | - |
| Q-19.2 Certificate | 2 | 0.4 | 1.5 |
| Q-19.3 Associate of Arts Degree | 13 | 2.3 | 20.4 |
| Q-19.4 Associate of Applied Science Degree | 31 | 5.4 | (AAS included with AA) |
| Q-19.5 Bachelor Degree | 251 | 44.0 | 37.4 |
| Q-19.6 Master | 196 | 34.3 | 5.3 |
| Q-19.7 Doctoral Degree or Professional Certificate | 30 | 5.3 | NA |
| Q-19.8 Not seeking a degree | 48 | 8.4 | 35.3 |
| Q-19. What is the highest degree you hope to receive during the next five years? | | | |

A commonly asked question with regard to profiles of UAA students is: How do UAA students compare to students nationwide? The American Freshmen: National Norms 1995, published by ACE, provides a comparison between UAA students and students enrolled in post-secondary institutions across the country. The ACE data in Table 32 shows that, nationally, American freshmen aspire to attain higher educational goals than UAA students. One of the reasons for arriving at such a conclusion is that 4% of UAA students indicate obtaining a bachelor's degree as their highest goal, whereas only 27.4% or far fewer freshmen in the country set their goals that low. This finding, in itself, is not enough reason for alarm because of the inherent differences between freshmen as a group and UAA's older non-traditional students. With older students, unlike with freshmen, the student role is

always secondary. Even when extensively engaged in education, adults see themselves first in their occupational and/or family roles.

American freshmen across the nation have aspirations for higher educational attainment than students enrolled at UAA. This difference can be attributed to the fact that freshmen, as a group, are more enthusiastic, curious and willing to work. With older students, like those at UAA, willingness to aspire for higher educational goals, has to be a secondary priority, 'sandwiched' between other occupational and family priorities.

Table 32

| Highest Degree Planned by American Freshmen as Compared to UAA Students Reasons for Enrolling | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| American Freshmen Highest Degree | Planned % | UAA Survey Respondents Highest Degree Aspired in Next 5 Years % |
| Not Seeking a Degree | 0.8 | 8.4 |
| Vocational/Certificate | 1.0 | .4 |
| Associate | 5.5 | 2.3 |
| Bachelor's | 27.4 | 44 |
| Master's | 37.0 | 34 |
| Ph.D. OR ED. | 13.8 | 5.3 |
| Professional & other | 14.4 | (Included with Ph.D. or Ed.D.) |
| Total | 99.9 | 100 |
| Source: The American Freshmen: National Norms 1995, ACE | | |

Continuing on with the theme of identifying factors associated with UAA's non-traditional students, the survey included a question on employment status of students. Responses of students who identified their employment status are presented in Table D. It comes as no surprise that 40.4% of UAA's students are employed full-time and another 22.8% are employed part-time. Here the opportunity for UAA is to take this significant situational factor - a student body already well embedded in the workforce - and build on this factor to develop partnerships with external constituency groups. On other words, the potential for UAA lies in building on-campus coalitions with outside groups such as local industries seeking more trained technical employees and other adult professional organizations. Competitive influences that UAA needs to be sensitive to have to do with the fact that

non-traditional educational experiences can and are offered by industry and other professional organizations. If we do not meet the needs of the workforce, someone else will.

Table 33

| Q-20. | | Employment Status | | N | % |
|---|---|-------------------|--|-----|------|
| Q-20.1 | Military full-time active duty | | | 31 | 5.4 |
| Q-20.2 | Occupational retraining program (JTPA, DVR) | | | 5 | 0.9 |
| Q-20.3 | Self-employed | | | 34 | 5.9 |
| Q-20.4 | Employed full-time | | | 232 | 40.4 |
| Q-20.5 | Employed part-time | | | 131 | 22.8 |
| Q-20.6 | Unemployed, seeking employment | | | 67 | 11.7 |
| Q-20.7 | Unemployed, not seeking employment | | | 64 | 11.1 |
| Q-20.8 | Retired | | | 10 | 1.7 |
| Q-20. Please select one of the following which best describes your employment status. | | | | | |

Here the opportunity for UAA is to take one of our significant situational factors - a student body already well embedded in the workforce - and build on this factor to develop partnerships with external constituency groups.

The other issue to keep in mind, in analyzing older working student segments, is that students are colleagues in learning. As we focus on UAA's students who are currently engaged in the work force, we need to remind ourselves that these students who personify UAA's Learn for Life philosophy, bring with them a set of life experiences, skills and knowledge that should be tapped to enhance the teaching and learning process of our institution. Capitalizing on the rich backgrounds our students bring to the institution, UAA's College of Technical and Community Education has made a commitment to focus on the adult learner through:

- workforce-oriented business and industry partnerships, offering custom tailored curriculum and training and retraining the workforce;
- community-focused outreach efforts, community partnerships, practical and applied curriculum and other offerings that help the community keep pace with technology.

In studying profiles that document needs of UAA students, the extent to which our students are first-generation students is one more characteristic that can further our understanding of students. As the term implies, first-generation students are the first members of their families to attend college. Prior to enrolling in a college or university, they are likely to have attended poor public schools and experienced greater rates of failure while in school. They probably received insufficient positive feedback from parents, teachers and classmates. Literature suggests that first-generation students are characterized by low self-confidence, low motivational levels, a tendency to be less assertive verbally and lack career goals. For review of these and other characteristics of first-generation students, see, among others, Noel, L., Levitz, R., & Saluri Increasing Student Retention, Jossey-Bass, 1991; and, Friedlander, J. "Are College Support Programs and Services Reaching High Risk Students", Journal of College Student Personnel, 1980, 21, 23-28.

Table 34 lists responses of UAA students to the query on educational attainment of their parents. As shown in Table 34, 54.9% of UAA students had parents who have not completed a bachelor's degree.

Table 34

| Q-22. | First Generation Students at UAA | 'Yes' Response | |
|---|--|----------------|------|
| | | N | % |
| Q-22.1 | Mother earned a bachelor's degree or higher | 159 | 27.6 |
| Q-22.2 | Father earned a bachelor's degree or higher | 214 | 37.6 |
| Q-22.3 | Guardian earned a bachelor's degree or higher | 11 | 6.3 |
| Q-22.4 | None of the above earned a bachelor's degree or higher | 316 | 54.9 |
| Q-22. A first generation student is defined as one raised by a parent(s) or guardian(s) who had not completed a bachelor's degree. Please help us identify if you are a first-generation student by answering YES or NO to the following. | | | |

The next question on the survey asked students to indicate by whom they were raised. Responses show that 83% were raised by both parents.

Table 35

| Q-22. | By Whom Were You Raised? | N | % |
|--------|--------------------------|-----|------|
| Q-23.1 | Both parents | 472 | 83.0 |
| Q-23.2 | Mother | 70 | 12.3 |
| Q-23.3 | Father | 14 | 2.5 |
| Q-23.4 | Guardian | 13 | 2.3 |
| Q-23. | By whom were you raised? | | |

The reason for including the question on who in the family raised students enrolled at UAA, was to allow for the U.S. Department of Education's definition of first-generation students to be applied to UAA students.

The U.S. Department of Education (1996) defines a first-generation student as:

- an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or
- in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

Applying this definition to data in Table 34 and 35, a total of 322 students, amounting to 56.6% of the survey sample, were identified as first-generation students. Table 36 provides an ethnic breakdown for first-generation students identified among the survey respondents.

A total of 322 students, amounting for 56.6% of the survey sample, were identified as first-generation students. These students have lacked guidance in coping with university life and its daily academic and social problems. In other words, these students did not enter UAA as individuals socialized in the implicit norms, roles and behaviors that are expected of students in a university setting.

Table 36

| Ethnic Breakdown of UAA First Generation Students As Identified by the U.S. Department of Education Guidelines | | |
|--|-----|------|
| | N | % |
| African American/Black | 19 | 5.9 |
| Alaska Native | 23 | 7.1 |
| American Indian | 8 | 2.5 |
| Hispanic | 16 | 5.0 |
| Other | 9 | 2.8 |
| Pacific Is./Asian | 10 | 3.1 |
| White | 236 | 73.3 |
| Total | 322 | 100% |

One particular group of students not distinguished sufficiently from the overall category of high-risk students is the low-income students. The low-income variable is yet another characteristic trait in the overall mosaic of non-traditional, high-attrition students. Scrutiny of literature reveals that ethnic and racial minority students are viewed as being low-income students. In reality, attrition studies are replete with discussions that refer to minority and low-income students as one group. How these low-income students are cataloged is not as important as being able to define what is considered low-income with reference to Alaska's cost-of-living and then being able to conclusively identify the extent of the problem with UAA students.

Table 37 lists the frequency number and percent with which a given income category was selected by those responding to the survey. Thirty-six percent of the sample indicated their annual family income to be in excess of \$50,000.

Table 37

| Q-24. Current Annual Family Income of Survey Respondents | | | N | % |
|--|-----------------------|--|-----|------|
| Q-24.1 | Less than \$13,800 | | 54 | 9.7 |
| Q-24.2 | \$13,900 to \$18,450 | | 35 | 6.3 |
| Q-24.3 | \$18,500 to \$23,100 | | 23 | 4.1 |
| Q-24.4 | \$23,150 to \$27,750 | | 28 | 5.0 |
| Q-24.5 | \$27,800 to \$32,400 | | 47 | 8.5 |
| Q-24.6 | \$32,450 to \$37,050 | | 21 | 3.8 |
| Q-24.7 | \$38,100 to \$41,700 | | 34 | 6.1 |
| Q-24.8 | \$41,750 to \$46,350 | | 24 | 4.3 |
| Q-24.9 | \$46,400 to \$50,000 | | 19 | 3.4 |
| Q-24.10 | Over \$50,000 | | 202 | 36.4 |
| Q-24.11 | Prefer not to respond | | 68 | 12.3 |
| Q-24. What is your current annual family income? | | | | |

In addition to annual family income, the number of individuals in a household is a significant factor in estimating levels of financial need or poverty. Table 38 provides data on the number of individuals in the household of students who responded to the survey.

Table 38

| Q-26. | Number of Individuals in Household of UAA Survey Respondents | 'Yes' | |
|--------|---|---------------|------|
| | | Response N | % |
| Q-26.1 | One person | 86 | 15.0 |
| Q-26.2 | Two people | 176 | 30.7 |
| Q-26.3 | Three people | 125 | 21.8 |
| Q-26.4 | Four people | 114 | 19.9 |
| Q-26.5 | Five people | 38 | 6.6 |
| Q-26.6 | Six people | 20 | 3.5 |
| Q-26.7 | Seven people | 9 | 1.6 |
| Q-26.8 | Eight people | 4 | 0.7 |
| Q-26.9 | Nine people | 2 | 0.3 |
| Q-26. | How many individuals live in your household? | | |

The following Table 39, is reproduced from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services notice in the Federal Register of March 4, 1996, Volume 61, Number 27, pages 8286-8288. The guidelines provided in Table 39 are used for determining financial need for students with low-income levels, relative to the Federal Trio Programs.

Table 39

| Federal Guidelines for Income Levels Considered "Low" | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|--|
| Size of Family Unit | Contiguous 48 States, the District of Columbia & Outlying Jurisdictions | Alaska | Hawaii | |
| 1 | \$11,205 | \$14,010 | \$12,915 | |
| 2 | \$15,045 | \$18,810 | \$17,325 | |
| 3 | \$18,885 | \$23,610 | \$21,735 | |
| 4 | \$22,725 | \$28,410 | \$26,145 | |
| 5 | \$26,565 | \$33,210 | \$30,555 | |
| 6 | \$30,405 | \$38,010 | \$34,965 | |
| 7 | \$34,245 | \$42,810 | \$39,375 | |
| 8 | \$38,085 | \$47,610 | \$43,710 | |
| For family units with more than 8 members, add the following amount for each additional family member: \$3,840 for the contiguous 48 states, the District of Columbia and outlying jurisdictions; \$4,800 for Alaska; and \$4,410 for Hawaii. | | | | |

Applying the above income guidelines to UAA student data presented in Tables 37 and 38, 96 students, accounting for 18.8% of the survey sample, were identified as being low-income or in poverty. Table 40 provides an ethnic breakdown for the 96 UAA students identified as being low-income.

Only 18.8% of UAA students (N=96 out of 580 who responded to the survey) are considered to be low-income.

Table 40

| Ethnic Breakdown of UAA Low-Income Students As Identified by the U.S. Department of Education Guidelines | | |
|--|----|------|
| | N | % |
| African American/Black | 6 | 6.3 |
| Alaska Native | 10 | 10.4 |
| American Indian | 2 | 2.1 |
| Hispanic | 5 | 5.2 |
| Other | 2 | 2.1 |
| Pacific Is./Asian | 2 | 2.1 |
| White | 69 | 71.9 |
| Total | 96 | 100% |

Finally, Table 41 identifies the number and proportion of students in the survey sample who claimed any income from public assistance. Data in Table 41 shows that 3.5% of the sample report they received income from public assistance.

Table 41

| Income from Public Assistance? | | 'Yes' Response | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| Q-25. | | N | % |
| Q-25: | Income from public assistance | 20 | 3.5 |

PART IV. SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

This study is a report on a survey of 770 randomly selected UAA Anchorage campus students. The survey instrument was developed in-house and administered via telephone, resulting in a 75.3% response rate.

Part I: Educational Goals at UAA

- In creating a profile of personal aspirations and academic self-confidence of the UAA student body, the survey reveals that 80% of students are enrolled because they want to pursue a degree. Further, 55% of them state that they want to obtain a bachelor's degree. In addition to a degree, half the students enrolled state that they are here taking courses for self-improvement.
- Most of UAA students who declare themselves as "degree-seeking" truly are degree-seeking. In other words, they are not simply declaring an intent to seek a degree in order to gain financial aid or priority registration status.
- Among students who are not in a degree program, 47% have considered applying for a degree program. The remaining 53%, for the most part, do not appear to be undecided about their reasons for not having considered applying for a degree. In fact, they indicate factors such as being too old, too young, already having completed degrees, or not being in the state long enough as their reasons for having no interest in entering a degree program.
- Only 21% of UAA students have enrolled directly out of high school. Fifty-four percent of the students are entering after having worked for a period of time. Thirty percent are here for work-related reasons and continue to work while enrolled at UAA. Twenty-eight percent are entering after managing a home.
- An overwhelming 87% of UAA students state that UAA's location is their reason for choosing the institution. Opportunities to succeed and financial circumstances were also major reasons for choosing UAA, mentioned by more than half the students.
- Seventy-two percent of students enrolled in Spring 1996, indicated that they would re-enroll in the up-coming fall semester. Fall 96 enrollment statistics show that three-fourths of those who indicated they were going to continue enrolling, actually did.
- Students' reasons for not attending UAA in Fall 1996, for the most part, do not reflect institutional obstacles.

Part II: Services and Facilities at UAA

- UAA services and facilities used very frequently by students include: the bookstore, the Consortium Library, the Campus Center, Learning Resources Center, computer labs and faculty advisors.
- Fifty-two percent of UAA students academic advising needs are met by faculty. The majority of students (80%) claim that their advising needs have been met.
- With regard to preferences in instructional delivery, 70% of the students prefer traditional classrooms, 17% will enroll in whatever is available at the time and only 2% state a preference for telecourses.
- Students prefer not to take classes in the morning.
- Weekend mornings and afternoons were as popular as weekdays for taking classes. Fifty-four percent of students expressed an interest in weekend college, and another 11% said they would consider it.
- Fifteen percent of currently enrolled students would live in campus housing if it were available.
- Students (80%), state clearly and definitively, that they have high confidence in UAA faculty as being effective in helping them realize their goals.

Part III: Characteristics of UAA Students Who Are At-Risk

- Sixty-five percent of UAA's students have re-enrolled in higher education after a lapse of at least five years.
- While only 5% of students are currently enrolled in master's programs, 34% aspire to complete a graduate degree.
- Forty percent of UAA students are employed full-time and an additional 22% are employed part-time.
- First-generation students account for 56% of UAA students.
- Low-income students account for 18% of those enrolled at UAA.



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